

Message Text

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4811

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE LABOR SCENE REFLECTS POLITICAL DIVISIONS

REF: LISBON 4293 291745Z JUL 75

SUMMARY: BECAUSE OF INTERSINDICAL'S REPEATED, UNQUESTIONING
SUPPORT FOR COMMUNIST PARTY POLITICAL INITIATIVES, IT IS RAPIDLY
LOSING ALL PRETEXT OF BEING A REPRESENTATIVE LABOR ORGANIZATION.
THE PCP IS USING ITS CONTROL OF THE INTERSINDICAL SECRETARIAT TO
EXPLOIT THE LABOR MOVEMENT FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES BUT PCP
DOMINATION IS BEING INCREASINGLY CHALLENGED BY TACTICAL ALLIANCES
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BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE FAR-LEFT MRPP. COMMUNIST

LEADERSHIPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN OUSTED FROM SEVERAL UNIONS AND SEEM LIKELY TO BE DEFEATED IN OTHER IMPORTANT UNION ELECTIONS. COMMUNISTS ARE USING VARIETY OF SUBTERFUGES TO RETAIN POWER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEWLY CONSTITUTED LABOR CONFEDERATION, INTERSINDICAL, IS RAPIDLY LOSING ANY ACCEPTANCE IT MAY HAVE HAD WITHIN PORTUGAL AS A REPRESENTATIVE LABOR ORGANIZATION AS A RESULT OF ITS ABJECT SUBSERVIENCE TO THE POLITICAL MANEUVERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP). RECENT INTERSINDICAL CALLS FOR A GENERAL WORK STOPPAGE ON AUGUST 19, AND FOR PARTICIPATION IN A PRO-COPCON DEMONSTRATION AUGUST 20, ARE TWO RECENT DIRECT RESPONSES TO PCP INITIATIVES.

2. THE PCP SUCCEEDED IN SECURING ITS CONTINUED CONTROL OF INTERSINDICAL'S SECRETARIAT DURING THE CAREFULLY STAGE-MANAGED NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS HELD JULY 25-27. THIS LEADERSHIP HAS A THREE YEAR TENURE AND WILL DOUBTLESS USE ALL PREROGATIVES OF POWER AVAILABLE TO IT TO REINFORCE ITS CONTROL. EXAMPLES ARE AVAILABLE WHERE THE INTERSINDICAL SECRETARIAT HAS USED MIS-REPRESENTATION, PRESSURES, AND GOVERNMENTAL COERCION TO OBTAIN ITS OBJECTIVES IN LABOR MATTERS.

3. INTERSINDICAL'S NEW LEADERSHIP IS ALREADY BEING ATTACKED AS "NON-REPRESENTATIVE." PRO-COMMUNIST FORCES ARE FACING SERIOUS CHALLENGES IN A NUMBER OF FORTHCOMING UNION ELECTIONS AND WILL PROBABLY LOSE CONTROL OF SOME IMPORTANT UNIONS. HOWEVER, THEIR ABILITY TO USE THE APPARATUS OF INTERSINDICAL WILL ENABLE THEM TO RETAIN INFLUENCE OVER A LARGE PART OF ORGANIZED LABOR.

4. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR INTERSINDICAL'S CURRENT PROBLEMS:

- THE GROWING MILITANCY OF NON-COMMUNIST LABOR ELEMENTS RESENTFUL OF COMMUNIST PRESSURE TACTICS.
- THE ALIENATION OF MANY UNIONS UNABLE TO GET INTERSINDICAL SUPPORT IN THE PAST FOR STRIKES IN FAVOR OF WAGE DEMANDS.
- THE GROWING PRACTICE FOR INFORMAL TACTICAL ALLIANCES BETWEEN SOCIALIST PARTY SUPPORTERS AND MEMBERS OF FAR-LEFT MRPP (AND SOMETIMES UDP) GROUPS IN THE FORMATION OF COMMON SLATES IN UNION ELECTIONS.

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--INTERINDICAL'S DISSIPATION OF PREVIOUS WIDESPREAD WORKER SUPPORT IT RECEIVED--TOGETHER WITH THE AFM--FOR LONG OVERDUE WAGE INCREASES AND IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE APRIL 25 REVOLUTION. THIS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT HAS BEEN DISSIPATED BY REPETITIVE CALLS FOR MASSIVE POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS IN FAVOR OF PCP POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. INTERSINDICAL'S APPEALS ARE NOW ANSWERED PRIMARILY BY PCP FAITHFUL AND THEIR POLITICAL ALLIES, AS IS APPARENT FROM THE DISMAL FAILURE OF

THE NATIONAL VOLUNTARY WORK DAY JUNE 10 AND THE POOR
RESPONSE TO GENERAL WORK STOPPAGE CALLED FOR AUGUST 19.

5. IT IS NOW POLITICALLY RESPECTABLE FOR UNIONS OPENLY TO
OPPOSE INTERSINDICAL, SOMETHING THAT COULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED
TWO MONTHS AGO WITHOUT THE DISSIDENT LEADERSHIP HAVING TO DEFEND
ITSELF AGAINST ACCUSATIONS OF BEING REACTIONARIES,
DIVISIONISTS, AND IMPERIALIST DUPES. INTERSINDICAL'S LISBON
OFFICES WERE STONED BY A SOCIALIST/MRPP CROWD AUGUST 19
FOLLOWING THE GENERAL WORK STOPPAGE. THIRTY-TWO UNIONS--OF THE
SOME 190 PARTICIPATING IN THE NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS--FAVORED
POSTPONEMENT OF THE CONGRESS UNTIL OCTOBER WHEN NEW, SECRET
BALLOT UNION ELECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED. ALTHOUGH THEIR PROPOSAL
WAS NOT DISCUSSED BY THE CONGRESS, IT IS EVIDENCE OF OPPOSITION
EVEN WITHIN INTERSINDICAL.

6. LISBON AREA UNIONS CURRENTLY OPPOSING PCP DOMINATION OF
INTERSINDICAL, SOME OF WHICH HAVE REJECTED AFFILIATION, ARE THE
NEWLY ELECTED LEADERSHIP OF THE JOURNALISTS, TAP AIRLINE EMPLOYEES,
SUBWAY WORKERS, JEWELERS, PORT WORKERS, JUDICIAL EMPLOYEES,
GARAGE WORKERS, CINEMA WORKERS, EMPLOYEES OF INDUSTRIAL WELFARE
FUND, AND THE POST OFFICE, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE WORKERS UNION
(CTT), OF WHICH THE LISBON TELEPHONE WORKERS ARE AN IMPORTANT AND
VOCAL COMPONENT.

7. UNIONS IN NORTHERN PORTUGAL OPPOSING INTERSINDICAL INCLUDE
THE PORT WORKERS, BANK EMPLOYEES, NEWS PAPER EMPLOYEES,
TECHNICAL ENGINEERS, DRAFTSMEN, HOTEL WORKERS, CERAMIC WORKERS, AND
GARMET WORKERS.

8. LEADERSHIP IN THE FOLLOWING UNIONS IS BEING DISPUTED:
--THE PHARMACEUTICAL WORKERS UNION'S PRO-INTERSINDICAL LEADER-
SHIP WAS DEFEATED JULY 26 IN A CLOSE ELECTION
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(2530 TO 2184 VOTES). INCUMBENT LEADERSHIP ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES
AND IMPUGNED ELECTIONS, AND WAS SUPPORTED BY MINISTRY OF LABOR
WHICH IS SUPPORTING MOVE TO CONVENE NEW ELECTIONS FOR NOVEMBER
15. UNION'S OFFICES WERE OCCUPIED AUGUST 19 BY SAME CROWD WHICH
STONED INTERSINDICAL AND BY MEMBERS OF WINNING LIST. SITUATION
STILL UNRESOLVED. OUTCOME OF IMPORTANCE AS LOSING SLATE INCLUDES
A NEWLY ELECTED MEMBER OF INTERSINDICAL SECRETARIAT.
--CHEMICAL WORKERS UNION REMAINS UNDER PCP CONTROL AFTER
A RIGGED ELECTION (ABETTED BY MINISTRY OF LABOR) WHICH OUSTED
SOCIALIST/AOC LEADERSHIP.
--MERCHANT MARINE, AVIATION, AND FISHING ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES
UNION FORCED PRO-INTERSINDICAL LEADERSHIP TO TENDER RESIGNATIONS.
HOWEVER, LEADERSHIP RENEGED ON PROMISED RESIGNATIONS AUGUST 9.
--METAL WORKERS FEDERATION, THE MOST POWERFUL UNION IN PORTUGAL,
HAS SERIOUS FACTIONAL SPLITS BUT PRESENT PCP LEADERSHIP CAN

PROBABLY PREVAIL. ****\$*\$'##*)'')***\$**** *\$****)'****E*\$**\$'****&'**** G*****\$**'&#***&\$*
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